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ABSTRACT

Becoming Spectator

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A. Area of Research

The area of research of the thesis is the perception in contemporary theater, respectively the mapping of such theatrical experiences which are specific to contemporary theater. After a general theoretical placement of the problem of spectatorship, the dissertation aims to describe the phenomenon of viewing, atmosphere-perception, aural attention and immersion, self-formation and spectatorial subjectivation.

B. Methodology of Research

The general methodology of the research is phenomenological, with a strong interdisciplinary approach. As we advanced in our study, those contemporary theater theories and phenomenological treatises have emerged in the foreground which replace the accent from a specular/reflexive structure on a mode of perception based on the phenomenon of resonance, and are process-oriented. I think here, first of all, of Jean-Luc Nancy's sensible, poststructuralist phenomenological observations. Nancy takes into consideration not only the meaning but also the sound of the terms he is using in his writing about the process of listening, in such a way that there is a resonant interconnection between the subject matter and the method of writing about it. Generally, this procedure is adequate especially when treating such topics which elude the clarity and distinction of analytical thinking – how the esthetical experience would be.

Erika Fischer-Lichte's thoughts and observations capable of investing with coherence the most dispersed and highly complex theatrical phenomena – like the idea of the spectator as co-creator, the concept of the dense atmosphere, and the definition of theatrical community, to name but a few – proved to be indispensable for present thesis.

The chapters follow that general shift towards the musical dispositive, which would be one of the main characteristics of the contemporary theater also, as the dissertation presupposes. Thus, in an effort to overcome the distance between the spectator and the image s/he is looking at in the theater, I turned towards the question of the atmosphere, which, first and foremost, is capable of creating space. Researching the phenomena of the atmosphere I have arrived at the theme of aurality.

While looking for relevant contemporary theatrical manifestations of the aural dimensions of a performance, two questions have emerged with certain urgency: the question of the subject-in-process and that of the formation of the self. The study of the resonant self has lead to psychoanalytical insights into the subject of mechanisms of memory.

Gilles Deleuze's concept of subjectivation and his theory of the affect combined with the question of the mechanisms of memory brought into play the lingua trauma of contemporary art. Jill Bennett's theory of the empathic vision offers a relevant insight into this. Based on empirical considerations and theoretical research, I have arrived at the elaboration of the concept of traumatic subjectivation.

Thus, a certain trace of contemporary theatrical perception has emerged throughout the research, which could be summarized as follows: the phenomenon of the atmosphere transcended the two-dimensional register of the image, creating the space of the performance. The aural dimension put into motion the theatrical space. In this movement, the topic of the formation of the character and the formation of the spectator was raised again, but in a new perspective (resonance). Finally, the concept of traumatic subjectivation was conceived as a process that happens between actor and spectator.

C. Conclusions

I have arrived at the conclusions partly through theoretical considerations, partly from personal experiences as a spectator. The analyses of spectacles are re-integrations and tests of them. Theory and practice always have a productive effect on each other, and theater is a prominent ground for observing this. The thesis attempts to meet the requirements of the knowledgeable spectator, a requirement which is valid everywhere and anytime. Thus, I thought important to analyze spectacles that were staged in Tîrgu-Mureş, between 2015 and 2019, by directors Radu Afrim, János Mohácsi, Adrian Iclenzan and Sándor Zsótér.

The theoretical placement of the problem of spectatorship brought into attention a new emphasis accorded to the process of perception in theater. The research of the perceptual processes started with the act of seeing. I have studied the creative potential of the visual perception through different theories of vision, and arrived at a point where – in my attempt to include the spectator in the space of the theater –, had to turn to the theatrical atmosphere.

The research of the theatrical atmosphere emphasized such timely concepts as the subject-in-process and the community-in-process. Thus, the dissertation states that the phenomenon of the atmosphere in contemporary theater surpassed its status as a background or illustrative or decorative phenomenon, and became a decisive factor in staging, in the performance itself, and in the esthetical experience as well.

Every perceptual process involves a certain relationship between subject-orientation (emphasizes the perceiver's role in the perception) and object-orientation (emphasizes the

perceived object's role in the perception). This relationship pertains to the whole dissertation. The different processes of perception show variations in this sense, too. In the act of seeing the object-orientation is stronger, because the perceiver refers back to herself/himself as object (image, representation). In the case of the perception of the atmosphere we deal with a special combination of subject- and object-orientation, volatile but experienced in our body. Finally, during listening the subject-orientation is dominant, because the listener refers back – more or less directly – to herself/himself. In connection with this, while studying the phenomenon of the aural atmosphere, the question of the self-formation came into the foreground.

The first conclusion of the thesis is that the spectator becomes a self during the perception of the performance. S/he experiences her/his self during the performance – a self that did not exist before the performance, nor can it be fixed in the physical time or space. The way the spectator construes the performance, the performance construes the spectator, there is a relationship of chiasm between the two. Becoming spectator is a *process*, which has at its starting point the body as a chamber of resonance, or body without organs, and the openness and attention of the spectator.

The connection between listening and self-formation drew the attention to the idea of the resonant self. This is connected to different mechanisms of memory. A productive insight into the mechanisms of memory pertaining to the theater is offered by trauma theories.

The second conclusion is that the specific mechanisms of memory of certain contemporary performances show relevant analogies with the traumatic mechanisms of memory. We deal with human bodies in both cases, and the body is capable of retaining memories we don't remember. The theatrical performance is capable of activating such sense memories (or deep memories), which are unavailable for the ordinary, narrative or in our case dramatic memory. These emerge as affects, or temporalized sensations detached from the subject, but are perceived as bodily sensations by the spectator. These affects appear regardless of the will, expectations or horizon of the spectator, and direct her/his attention on her/his own perceptions and sensations. In this sense, we can say that the traumatic and theatrical memory work in the *same* way.

The third conclusion states that the contemporary theater might offer such possibilities of experiencing the self that are inaccessible otherwise. I termed this process of self-experience traumatic subjectivation. The traumatic subjectivation is a specific contemporary form of self-formation. It is capable to offer coherence to many a recent experience, and the

contemporary theater offers a singularly suitable possibility to reflect upon this exactly because there is a similarity between the mechanisms of theatrical and traumatic memory.

The traumatic subjectivation is a permanent movement between actor and spectator, between the experimenting of their bodies and languages in motion.

Three important concepts emerge from the research: the concept of atmosphere as spatialized emotion detached from the object; the concept of affect as temporalized sensation detached from the subject; and the concept of traumatic subjectivation constituted in the interaction of the previous two.

The final statement of the thesis is that the experience of the spectator of the traumatic subjectivation – a continuous movement between the deconstruction and reconstruction of the self – is in the mean time the source of the happiness and pain of the performance.

D. Summaries of the Chapters

I. Introduction

The first chapter is a general thematization of the question of spectatorship. It has two parts: the spectator in the theater, and the theater in the spectator.

The first part deals with the question of the direction (staging) being open to the spectator. During staging the director is necessarily in dialog with a virtual audience, but during the performance the spectator is free to carry on the direction. Erika Fischer-Lichte, approaching the question from the point of view of the aesthetics of performativity, opens completely the performance towards the spectator, and considers her/him the co-creator of it. The model co-creator would be, then, an autonomous embodied mind, capable of forming her/his own world, but in the mean time s/he is part of a process which also self-generates itself. Thus in the function of the autopoietic feed-back loop s/he has to calculate with accidental, unpredictable elements, too. The unpredictability is due, first of all, to the co-presence of two groups of people in the same space, at the same time.

The second part thematizes the recent event of the reemerging in the foreground of the reception processes. First I researched the complex relationship between presence and meaning employing Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's arguments and applying them to theater.

Niklas Luhmann, in order to conceptualize the 19. century endeavor to overcome the gap between conceptual cognition and sensual experience constituted in the aftermath of the Cartesian thinking, introduced the term of the second order observer. This seizes the moment when the primary or first order observer, who basically tackles only with the right distance

from the object of the observation, realizes that her/his observations reflect back upon herself/himself. This revelation compels her/him to observe her/his own observations, too, thus becoming a second order observer. Luhmann calls this process the self-referential loop. Furthermore, the second order observer reconnected the observation to the body of the observer and to the sense organs. The oscillation between the effect of presence and the effect of meaning (Gumbrecht) and the self-referential loop have a great applicability in contemporary theater and performance, too. Based on these, Erika Fischer-Lichte gave the most radical answer to the relationship between the perceptual processes and the meaning-formation. Using the concepts of the perceptual multistability and emergence, she argued that the meaning production happens inside and through the processes of perception. Finally, we emphasized that the new accent placed on the processes of perception have a cultural, social, political relevance, too.

II. The Potentials of Visual Perception in Contemporary Theater

The second chapter researches the creative potentials of seeing in contemporary theater. The creativity concerns mostly the freedom of the spectator to separate, reconnect, or associate the visual signs s/he is receiving the way s/he wishes. Through these procedures s/he construes the visual texture of the performance, in other words the spectator also creates the show s/he will see. Contemporary performances make aware the spectator of the creative side of seeing. On the other hand, the process corresponds to what Paul de Man called the tropological functioning of the text, or the allegory of reading. The performative functioning of the text, which de Man compares with Kant's description of the dynamic sublime, has a visual equivalent also, which is the perception of the pure image (term used by de Man), or the moment when the visual perceptions become so overwhelming that the observer cannot attribute any signification to them, or so many possible significations accumulate, that they undermine any interpretation.

The most relevant way to detect the specificity of the contemporary theatrical visual perception is by comparing it with other visual perceptions from the domain of digital and virtual arts and other media (film, television, video).

A. Erika Fischer-Lichte summarizes the differences between the theatrical and other media visual perceptions the following way: 1. the relationship between actor and spectator is determinant in theater, and involves a two-way communication, while in other media the communication is one-way; 2. the modes of perception and reception differ in that the theater

asserts the creative gaze of the spectator while the other media amplifies the passive, consumerist attitude; 3. the materiality of the signs: theater has accentuated its special materiality, concerning the use of space, body and sound.

B. The interaction with the new media opens up new creative possibilities. Different media presupposes different visual perception. Theater being able to incorporate any of the new media productions, might confront, combine, interchange, etc. them. Thus the spectator may experience the changes between these various modes of perception.

De Man's endeavor to capture the concept of material vision in Kant's treatment of the dynamic sublime can be viewed as an attempt to overcome the vision, which turns out to be impossible. On the other hand, the question of disposition, attunement, emerges already in the Kantian aesthetics, since it is supposed to substitute the conceptual mediation. In each case, the phenomenon of the disposition and atmosphere can be connected also to an effort of stepping out of the spectacular world of the image.

Finally, as we mentioned earlier, in visual perception the object-orientation is stronger, because the perceiver refers back to herself/himself as object (image, representation), while the perception of the atmosphere draws the attention to subject-orientation, and brings into play a volatile but bodily experienced combination of the two. Observing contemporary theatrical manifestations, it seems that a certain openness as well as need towards the experience of a dense theatrical atmosphere have aroused from the side of the reception, too.

III. The Potentials of the Theatrical Atmosphere

The main subject matter of the third chapter is the theatrical atmosphere. It has two parts: the first one researches the phenomenon of the theatrical atmosphere, the second one focuses on the relationship between attention and immersion in the perception of the sonorous atmosphere.

According to Erika Fischer-Lichte the theatrical atmosphere has three main aspects: spatial, thing-related and aural aspect. The treatment of the phenomenon of atmosphere follows this tripartite structure. Furthermore, given the difficulties to grasp the concept, a historical clarification of it is embedded in the subchapters, and in this endeavor David Wellbery's study proved to be of great help.

The **spatial aspect** of the atmosphere was articulated for the first time by Hermann Schmitz the following way: the atmosphere is the emotional efficacy of sentiments; a spatial carrier of dispositions. Thus, first I have studied the relationship between disposition, mood or

attunement and atmosphere, as their spatial correlation; then the experience of landscape in its spatial implications, and finally the architectural experience, all three being particularly relevant to theatrical experience.

The mood of the landscape integrates a wide range of sensorial data in some kind of perceptual entity which, nevertheless, doesn't dissolve the details, and is highly dependent on the observer. We could say that the atmosphere is a subjective formation capable of carrying of some kind of perceptual unity, and possesses a communicative side. Moritz Geiger conducted a phenomenological research of the disposition, also at the beginning of the twentieth century. He approached the question from the side of the subject (theory of empathy), but researched the contribution of the object to the experience of the mood, too. Certain components arrive from the side of the object, and they can be considered objective components (like the character of the landscape). The mood of the landscape is constituted, thus, in an oscillatory movement between the experiences of the observer (coming from the subject or subject-oriented elements), and the natural data (coming from the object or object-oriented components). The resulting percepts always got reintroduced in the circulation between the subjective and objective side, thus it involves a circular movement, too.

In conclusion, the theatrical atmosphere is a formation that has an integrative capacity, and it articulates the subject-oriented and object-oriented aspect of the perception. It has a liminal character, and it does incorporate the observer and the perceived object in the same space.

The phenomenological research of the **architectural experience** lead us to the following conclusions: the perception of the atmosphere is not a result of a perspective, intensive and focused attention, but the outcome of a pre-reflexive, peripheral and multisensory perception. Also, we have stated that the first things one observes when entering a space are not impressions, neither forms nor object, but the atmosphere of the space, which is, thus, the first percept of the process of perception and the background for the rest of the perceptual process.

Studying the relationship between atmosphere and things, I came upon the question of the ecstasy of things, elaborated by Gernöt Böhme, and applied to theatrical arts by Fischer-Lichte. They both lean on Jakob Böhme's description of object (thing) founded on the model of musical instrument. The ecstasy of things draws attention to a new (or rather unnoticed) aspect of the way we experience things or objects. Things too can signal their presence in the space, and the signs always refer to some kind of specificity, uniqueness that cannot be substituted with anything else. Accordingly, the atmosphere is a carrier of a "signature"

(Jakob Böhme's term) or sign of style, which communicates a sensual specificity that appears only then and there, bearing the characteristics of an event.

Finally, the thesis elaborated the idea of the ambivalent relationship between atmosphere and staging. This is based on the observation that the appearance of the atmosphere is unpredictable, in other words, one cannot stage an atmosphere. From the creative side, this means that only the conditions of its appearance can be created. Gernot Böhme termed these conditions generators. From the side of reception the formation of a theatrical atmosphere requires an active attitude. We enter it, and help its appearance. Once formed, the only possible attitude towards it is deictic. After the event, one may try also to describe it, as differentiated as possible.

The atmosphere of a performance space might be weak, strong or radical. Space-experience cannot be separated from the sensing of its atmosphere – this is the basis of the weak atmosphere. A strong or intensive atmosphere is constituted when the space draws attention on itself, and its perception exceeds the ordinary attention. This happens, for example, when we participate in a performance in an unusual space. The radical atmosphere depends mostly on the people present in that space, and in a common effort they might experience the presence of a radical atmosphere that transforms temporarily the space itself.

In conclusion, atmosphere is a corporeal experience. It has an integrative capacity, in a pre-reflexive, polyphonic, multisensory way. It has a strong intersubjective aspect, and thus a communicative side. As a corporeal phenomenon, it can retain, store and evoke memories. All these make it an important aspect of contemporary theater. Radu Afrim has staged four performances between 2015 and 2019, in Tîrgu-Mureş, which are centered on the phenomenon of the theatrical atmosphere. The thesis includes the analyses of all four of them.

The third aspect of the atmosphere is **aurality**.

Dense atmosphere acquired a special relevance in contemporary theater. As attunement or disposition makes accessible those existential experiences which are connected to searching. Its perception requires a particular sensibility connected to the environmental, ecological sensibility. Its inherent volatility, non-objectifiable character makes it flexible and adaptable. As aesthetical phenomenon, is connected to such contemporary phenomena as adaptive fragility (architectural term), slow lifestyle, slow dramaturgy, theater of slowness and slow architecture.

As we shall see, the aurality is a prominent feature of the theatrical atmosphere. The thesis treats first the correspondence between text, body and voice, and states that: 1. the

voice connects the body to the space; 2. the voice connects the body to the language; and 3. the voice supports a fragile identity, which then disputes.

Based on Lacan's ideas, three voice-text-images are differentiated: 1. the individual voice-text-image (the first imaginary sonoric body); 2. the socially codified voice-text-image filtered through the symbolic order; 3. the imaginary timbre or tone filtered through the corporal memory.

Helga Finter's studies proved indispensable in researching these complex phenomena. One of her relevant observations is that the actor's timbre reveals her/his relationship to the unconscious image of her/his own body. The actor works with this "material", and this work triggers in the spectator a similar process.

Finter, like most of the theater-theoreticians concerned with voice and sound, relies on Antonin Artaud's experiments. For Artaud the voice was that register that was able to evoke the reality of the body, and represent the text connected to it, simultaneously. Finter shows that Artaud in his radio plays deconstructed systematically all three voice-text-images, mentioned earlier.

The research of the voice-text-image relationship reveals that theater, through voice, offers a possibility to the formation of the subject. Based on this, Finter introduced the concept of the subject-in-process. This led to the mapping of different contemporary vocal dictions.

Based on the text-body-voice relationship, I researched the correspondence between atmosphere, body and voice. It proved relevant especially that case when the timbre or the voice of an actor is detached from her/his body, which is accompanied by a formation of a dense atmosphere. In this case, the atmosphere takes over the communicative function of the text, also. I analyzed in this regard János Mohácsi's staging of *The Visit* (Dürenmatt), in Tîrgu-Mureş, in 2015.

Finally, we studied the relationship between theatrical atmosphere and drama, as text and as action. In this sense, the atmosphere proved to be the other, the heterogene, or the alterity of the drama. For example, silence and motionlessness are strong atmosphere-generators. In this context, I analyzed Adrian Iclenzan's *Beauty* (written by Jon Fosse), premiered in Tîrgu-Mureş, in 2017.

The second major part of the third chapter concerns the **perception of the theatrical atmosphere**. It has three subchapters: the disposition-oriented reading, listening to music, and the perception of theatrical atmosphere, per se, with a separate subchapter about the intersubjective character of the perception of the atmosphere.

The disposition oriented reading or reading for Stimmungen draws the attention on the atmosphere generator capacity of the materiality of the text (for example prosody). According to Gumbrecht the atmosphere of the text provides a unique, direct and material access to the experience of the otherness, which will be relevant for the experience of the atmosphere in theater also.

Jean-Luc Nancy studies the phenomena of listening to music, and makes connections between the process of listening and the formation of self as well as the formation of sense.

Listening is an intensively **attentive** mode of hearing. This is true of all modalities, but listening has a special connection with meaning or sense. Ordinarily, if we listen to something, we understand what we have heard, we interpret the acoustic signs. In this case, the presence of the sound tends to disappear, while the meaning (of what we've heard) takes its place. While listening to music, the opposite process goes on: the sound tends to acquire meaning, and meaning becomes acoustic. Meaning comes into being through resonance, and becomes intelligible in its resonant foundation.

Listening has a special connection to presence. Listening happens in the presence of the self, but this isn't a simple presence, but more the presence of something, that cannot be objectified. It is a presence that comes and goes, expands and penetrates us, as sound does. Sound comes or leaves us, returns to us or gets delayed, etc. It is a movement that starts from the subject and goes towards it at the same time, and opens up the inside and outside for each other, and in this openness the self and the sense come into being.

The most direct example of the connection between the formation of the self and the formation of sense is the human voice. The voice founds a fragile identity, and questions it, instantaneously. It works in several registers: as resonance has a corporeal, material aspect (the body itself is a resonant chamber), as presence is one of the foundations of the subject, and is a source of the formation of the sonoric or imaginary body, as we shall see.

While studying the **perception of the aural atmosphere in theater** two main issues have emerged: attention and immersion.

The perception of sound in theater is a highly complex phenomenon. We are exposed to a whole scale of sounds from voice, through music till noise. The sounds we perceive might be intentional, designed ones or unintended, accidental noises.

Attention requires an effort in our quotidian life, but it does presuppose flexibility, spontaneity and playfulness, too. The object of the attention, in everyday life as well as in theater, is not something given to a passive observer, but it isn't and abstraction neither. It is a

phenomenally construed thing, which is formed and articulated in the dynamic, embodied, multisensory process of attention.

Aaron Gurwitsch stated that the attention doesn't work like a reflector light, but it has a spherical quality. The area of attention is spherical, and it does have a theme, a context and a margin. All three are spatial dimensions and have a certain function in the process of the attention. Thus, we can speak of thematic, contextual and marginal attention. The thematic attention focuses on the theme of what we hear. The contextual attention works in the context of theme, and might be closely or loosely connected to it. The marginal attention pertains to the dimension of margins. If its content refers to the theme, we call it halo, and if it doesn't concern it, it is named horizon.

The subject of the attention *is* the sphere of attention, itself, in its three dimensions. In other words, the sphere of attention doesn't constitute an object for the subject. We don't owe our sphere of attention, either, but we live it permanently, in its whole scale from the quotidian attention to self-reflection.

With the accentuated importance accorded to atmosphere, the intensity and length of the attention (of both, actors' and spectators') have been changed in contemporary theater also. In the mean time, we have a whole new brand of theater, called immersive theater that, it seems, requires something else from the spectators.

George Home-Cook studies the phenomenal dynamics of **immersion** through immersive theater. Immersive theater is a site-specific performance that promises a whole sensorial immersion to its participants; the manifestation of the experience of immersion. Sometimes it is connected to directness and authenticity, since, supposedly, it doesn't just involve the spectators in the world of the spectacle, but it invites them in the world of experience. It might seem that being immersed in the "sea of experience", doesn't require consciousness. But immersion implies a certain state of mind, of being in it, not unlike when we are doing something with intense attention. Likewise, the body doesn't simply immerse in its sonic surrounding, but it is in a dynamic, tense relationship with it, too. Home-Cook connects the phenomenon of sound, first of all, with movement. We give sound to the sound; the sound is formed by our manifold relationship with it.

In the act of listening, we listen to a correspondence between space, sound and self. The aural immersion is prone to different acts of attention and is connected to movement. The sound is moving, and we move within it, thus the experience of immersion is always a dynamic and polymorphic phenomenon.

In conclusion, attention and immersion never exclude each other, on the contrary, they presuppose each other; there is a dyadic relationship between them – and contemporary theater is a perfect ground to experience this.

The perception of the theatrical atmosphere has a prominent aspect, which is its **intersubjectivity**.

The question of intersubjectivity pertains first of all to the interaction between actors and spectators. Once the conditions of the appearance of the atmosphere have been created, the spectators contribute to its formation, while the atmosphere integrates the two groups of people into a community. On the other hand, the individual spectators become a community of shared experiences during the performance.

Theater has a singular way of making aware the group of participants that the forming of a community is a process. Theatrical atmosphere is a strong creator of community, which has its roots, most probably, in the ritualistic origin of the theater.

According to Erika Fischer-Lichte there are four dimensions present in all those performances or festivities that have a ritual aspect. These are the liminal, transformative, conventional and cathartic dimension. These are connected to the physiological, emotional, energetic and motoric effect they produce. Analyzing Reinhardt's productions, Fischer-Lichte asserts that the community-feeling that famously characterized them, did not stem in some common symbolism built on a shared ideology or religion, but were based on special physical effects. These physical effects were a result of the presence of the masses in the same space and of the changes in the theatrical atmosphere. Thus, in this context we cannot speak of a political, national, religious or ideological community, but of a community which was created by performative means. Fischer-Lichte named this theatrical community.

A theatrical community, thus, is an impermanent, volatile, transitory community, that exists mostly during a performance. It isn't built on a common belief or ideology, not even on a shared interpretation, since it can exist without the aid of these, too. But it can create points of connection between the most diverse participants, who, in the mean while, can keep their individual beliefs, can create their personal associations and interpretations. The performance does not prompt to a common system of beliefs, but makes possible the sharing of an experience. These experiences do not dissolve the self, but make it flexible, offering the possibilities of participating in a transformative experience. The theatrical community is a community in a liminal state, which never coagulates into a collective identity, exactly because it is a corporeal, emotional, sensual community, which dissolves after the performance.

IV. Formation of Self

The fourth chapter is concerned with the formation of the character, the formation/becoming of the spectator, and that of the sense.

The starting point is Nancy's idea of self-formation elaborated in its connection with the act of listening. The hypothesis of a parallel between the formation of the self and the formation of the character occurred to me during a rehearsal period, when I had the possibility to observe a whole process of staging. I noticed the play between a "sensible/perceptible individuation" (the actor) and a "comprehensible/intelligible identity" (the character), in Nancy's terms.

The hypothesis here is that the formation of the character is a special case of the self-formation, where the presence to self happens in a perceptible way. The actor while working with his character perceives the formation of a field of resonance, which will be the place of the formation of the character. The actor observes the changes in intensity of this field, and when he enters the register of the presence to the character, this entrance – which is also a referral and a process of evocation – is enacted in his body.

The spectator observes also this process, and s/he rep-plays it in her/his self. The forming of the character belongs as much to the actor as to the spectator. In the mean time, during this process, the spectator observes the formations of her/his own self, which can be the specific source of a feeling of happiness. In the process of the perception of the performance, the spectator becomes a self, and becomes able to experience her/himself as her/himself – a rare occasion nowadays.

In other words, the spectator construes the spectacle and chiasmatically, the spectacle creates the spectator. Neither of them is previously given, nor can be fixed in physical time. The **becoming of spectator** is a process, also, built on the presence of the body as a resonance chamber, or body without organ (empty and open), and on the intense act of attention.

The concept of the self based on a resonant structure gives a wider, different and resonant meaning to meaning or sense, too. In this context, meaning becomes a liminal phenomenon that questions the boundaries between body, self and intersubjectivity. Listening makes possible the reverberation between sensual and intellectual registers. When we listen, we listen to the silence of the meaning. This is what the tense attention means, since in the attention the meaning is already present, or on the way to become present.

The contemporary reevaluation of the musical dispositive doesn't involve only that the staging and the work of the actor is more and more based on musical principles, but also it implies that the spectator must become an attentive listener, again.

I believe that the theatrical application of Nancy's ideas – regarding listening and the formation of the self and of the sense – have a special resonance today.

V. – VI. Traumatic subjectivation – The happiness/pain of the performance

The hypothesis of the fifth chapter is that the traumatic subjectivation is a special and contemporary case of the self-formation. According to Deleuze, the subjectivation is a process of creating subjectivities, and we have to be on the look-out for all new possibilities of subjectivation, exactly because there is no such thing as subject.

It seems that the concept of the traumatic subjectivation is able to endow with coherence recent experiences, and contemporary theater presents a possibility to reflect upon these. The spectator is able to experience during the performance the formation of her/his own self, thus s/he might experience the process of traumatic subjectivation.

The traumatic subjectivation brings into attention such cardinal themes as the process of memory (sense-memory or deep memory), the insufficiency of representation, and the desire to articulate oneself, as well as the question of the access to affects.

Tamás Ullmann has delineated three types of subjectivities: **the narrative, the affective and the traumatic subjectivity**. According to him, the narrative subjectivity fails to include certain experiences, while the traumatic subjectivity can be applied either to too unique cases (Auschwitz), or to too general ones (the trauma of birth), which questions the applicability of the term, although in my view the above conditions make the term relevant today. Ullmann, then, relies on the affective subjectivity as the most suitable to explain the dynamics of the subject, but has to introduce a so-called secondary or subconscious register in order to do that. It seems that the theories of subjectivity approaching from the phenomenon of sound are the most convincing. One of them is a psychoanalytical theory based on the concept of the rhythmic or resonant self.

The **resonance-based concept of self** was elaborated by psychoanalysts Miklós Ábrahám and Mária Török. They demonstrated that the rhythmization belongs to the essential structures of the mind. Through the expectations, fulfillments, surprises, etc. activated by the rhythmizing mind the subject experiences such recurring modes that belong to the structure of time. The concepts of introjection and incorporation are different functions of memory which

lead to the question of the traumatic memory. Visual art theoretician Jill Bennett thinks that the theories of trauma might offer a relevant insight into contemporary art. She also relies on Deleuze's concept of affect, and asserts that on the territory of the visual and performance arts the question of the affect might be put as a possibility for a dynamic relationship between artist and spectator.

Deleuze connects the **affects** to sensations and instincts. The sensation is an effect of different forces on the body. They are vibrations that can form levels of sensation. If certain resonance comes into play between different levels of sensation, blocks of sensations are created. In his view, art works with blocks of sensations, which are made of affects and percepts. The affects, due to their intensity, can detach themselves from the subject.

As we have stated earlier, atmospheres can be considered spatialized emotions detached from the object, and similarly, affects can be viewed as temporalized sensations detached from the subject.

According to psychological studies, emotions exist only in present time. If we try to remember emotions, we inadvertently turn them into representations, in other words, there is no such thing as emotional memory. But reconstituting an analogous situation, we can reactivate them. On the other hand, affect and representation always exclude each other. A traumatic or intensely affective experience cannot be weaved into a narration. Thus, there isn't traumatic memory, either, which, of course, doesn't mean that the trauma doesn't have a memory structure of its own.

According to Bennett, artists who work with a so-called secondary imagery might provide and access to traumatic or intensely affective experiences. They try to activate the experience, which is a highly subjective process. Art concerned with the traumatic memory doesn't work with the object of the memory, but with the process of memory, here and now. This involves a peculiarly dynamic interaction between artist and spectator.

The sense-memory or deep memory (concept coming from theories of trauma) has an access to the source of the artwork, and works through the body. We register in a similar way the pain of the memory also, and we communicate it through bodily affects. Art working with sense-memory tries to find a language for this process, more precisely, it articulates the process of the search of a language. With the help of Foucault, we can state that the art of sense-memory, thus, is a re-enacting of that troublesome relationship that lies between the ordinary memory and that other memory, which threatens with undermining the coherence of the ordinary memory. Since traumatic experiences cannot be simply represented, they move on that borderline or interface where the negotiations with social and cultural institutions

happen. Deleuze moved this process further inside and outside of the subject, nevertheless art registers the interactions inside the memory. The reason why affects are essential for the arts is that they cannot be produced with traditional devices or techniques, because they are generated like intensities.

The poetics of the sense-memory doesn't concern the articulation of certain memories or experiences, but an articulation coming from within the body that upholds those memories.

Hal Foster presupposes that the recent ample preoccupations with the traumatic in the context of visual arts is a return of the Real (in Lacanian sense) suppressed by the postmodern and poststructuralist approaches. Due to the numerous artworks concerned with traumatic experiences, the discourse about the subject got reactivated, too. In this context, the critic of the subject is radical: it either gets evacuated or reevaluated. The traumatic subject is an answer to both: the need to accept the deeply troubled subjectivity coming from a disintegrated society (shattered subjectivity), respectively, the expectation of reconfirming the identity (the unquestionable witness).

Theater is a space of the memory, from the beginning. The performance is such an alive process, which invites or even forces the spectator to remember, and is capable of reactivating sense-memories in her/his body. The process of perception as well as that of the meaning-attribution is always based on memory, but theater has a special memory structure. It works with memories that does not have an original, it follows traces that itself left. It can create or abolish a space of memory in an instant; it can detach us from the images and thrust back into our bodies. Theater moves on the threshold between body and language.

Thus, the thesis asserts that the specific functioning of the theatrical memory is analogous with the mechanism of traumatic memory. Besides working with images, events, memories that keep repeating themselves, but always in a somewhat different way, theater is capable of articulating in a direct way the problematic relationship between memory and representation. What is it that undermines the integrity of the memory built on representation, that questions its functioning, that shows us the pain of negotiating with it? How can theater access that material trace, remainder?

Working with the body of the actor and spectator, which retain the traumatic memories, a theatrical performance might reactivate those sense-memories that are inaccessible to the narrative memory – or to the dramatic memory. The strength of the affects might break through the wall of representation causing somatic effects in the body of the actor and spectator, and might generate intensities that resonate in their bodies. The traumatic

subjectivation is an ongoing movement between actor and spectator, between the experience of their own and the other one's body and language that can never be fixed.

Gerald Sigmund remarks that the body remembers those experiences that were burned inside it; retains the painful memories that contributed to its formation. To paraphrase him: the special memorial relationship between actor and spectator is built on cultural, historical, apparition-like subjective wounds and injuries.

The spectator and the actor perceive the apparitions of the shattered subjectivity as traumatic subjectivation, which keeps repeating itself, but always in a somewhat different way. The traumatic subjectivation is a permanent de- and reconstruction of the self, reaching its extremities time and again. It sets in motion layers of wounds long forgotten, releasing an amazing amount of energy, which makes it the source of happiness and pain of the spectacle, also.

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